

Speech by Mr. Enrique Tejera Paris held on March 19, 1981.

Brother President, Sisters and Brothers,

A great importance of the information that we have heard from those who have spoken before me prevents me from being tempted to give you a panoramic view of the problems of the latin-American world.

Furthermore I am not prepared, nor am I qualified so to do.

I would rather refer briefly, since it is very late, to four main items, which might serve as a subject for discussion at this meeting so wisely convened by the M.E.P.

In the first place I would like to express a concern we have in Accion Democratica, the concern for that kind of conspiracy that has been mentioned a great deal in the press and in the media thru which it would seem as if the International is a body full of divisions and losing its decisions to come closer to those who separated from us in 1918.

Things for instance such as we heard in the world press also, which leads us to a very organized campaign and well financed campaign, words such as those lead us to see large expressions in the press with sentences such as this.

I am reading from newspapers from Latin America and Europe one says. "Word Socialism is close to communism", this is in reference to our deliberations in the Dominican Republic.

Again referring to the "deformalism". And now the campaign is against our dear President of International Socialist Willy Brandt , etc. etc.

Many things I would like to refer to quite rapidly. For example the matter of "demoformalism". A newspaper in Argentina, which is repeated world-wide states that the repression started again in Bolivia and that this means a rejection on the part of the socialist who listen to this without expressing a rejection of the principles and the functioning of representative democracy.

It is true that the communists and those with the disease of communism that Lenin himself referred to, used the word of formal democracy to say that the democracy that we practice or that we support, has not any formal characteristics. But on the other hand we must not forget the expressions used repeatedly by the founder of our party, an important leader worldwide and Latin-American also, Romulo Betancourt, when he quite often mentioned the former governments, those before 1945, in Latin-America as laughable democracy.

Democracy is not only a formalistic nature but it must accept the forms of the principles that are necessary for it to work with alternation in power, the improvement of the conditions of the masses.

What is characteristic of we socialist democrats, is that democracy day by day has new objectives as we ourselves satisfy and achieve the objectives we have already established for ourselves.

We should repeat this quite often so as not to be victims of the assaults neither from the right nor from the left. We are the only possible left for Latin-America.

Now in regard to sentences such as Cuba is not denounced in the Republica of Dominica, we could not refer every day to all the problems we have with the military gorilla of Latin America or Korea or so many places nor can we be referring daily to Fidel Castro and his dictatorship.

It is well-know that we must confirm that the Socialist Democrat parties cannot support nor will ever support a system that is not based on popular sovereignty and even-though there has been internal support which has given material advantages to Cuba and a world position that nobody can deny, we will continue to struggle and see that within Cuba the Cuban people obtained the full sovereignty and the right to vote and to chose their own government and to express their opinions freely.

Some newsmen become horrified stating that in the Declaration of Lima, at the meeting convened by our friends of the Alianza Popular Revolucionaria Americana, A.P.R.A., the Socialist International justifies insurrection for the taking over of office when there is no other path towards democracy.

Without going back to examples of Renaissance nor what we can find in the Church, the answer of many other Constitutions such as that of Venezuela, establish as a right to insurrection on the part of people so that when our governments and I am referring to the governments in which Accion Democratica has participated with our parties and I refer to all of us have supported insurrection against facism and military dictatorships. We are fulfilling the conservative constitutional principles of each one of our countries.

A great scandal was put forth in the press too with the communique issued by our brothers and comrades of the National Liberation of Costa Rica in respect to a press communique of the Socialist International.

I should state I was personally authorized by brother Monje to state this and to clarify the matter for the press of Venezuela but the communique from the Partido Liberacion

did not mean a distance between the Socialist International and that party . It was just a local response to an insidious campaign being carried out in Costa Rica to use the anti-communistic attitude of the people of Costa Rica that Liberacion Nacional was supporting Marxist-Leninist groups and hence it should not win the elections.

It was just electoral language being used as a response and had no other significance than to support the principles that nationally had been applied by Liberacion Nacional, and their very clear action can never be denied.

A lot has been said, right and left, and perhaps they have the right to. A lot has been said about the fact that in the struggle carried out by the heroic people of El Salvador against the military dictatorship Christian Democracy that oppresses the country weapons from other countries have been found.

In el Salvador, we all of us who know the degree of development of the industry in that country, all weapons have to come from abroad unless we were to use bows and arrows because we could not really get weapons except from foreign countries if we wanted to have an insurrection. But there is one thing that is true in El Salvador and that we can say quite sincerely here that the only weapons that we are sure from where they come from are the weapons that come from the United States, so that if we wish to finish a civil war any part of the world due to the elimination of weapons the greatest direct or indirect contributor to the government as well as to the guerrillas are weapons, in el Salvador, are the large manufacturers of weapons in the United States and in the case of the government these are the weapons from the army of the United States to the army that is oppressing El Salvador.

A second aspect, which I think I should refer to, on the instruction of brother Lusinchi, our secretary general, is the internal situation of Accion Democratica, because we have received many questions.

Accion Democratica has just gone thru a long period of internal elections. For years many of militants in the party have been involved in the decision for the choice of our party for different levels, five levels of government of our party. And we had the final election, the National Executive Party and the Bureau.

With this we must recall two apparently contradictory aspects. One is that the laws of Venezuela forces the political parties to be governed by an internal democratic system, that is to say these processes, even though they are traumatic, are obligatory by law.

All our political parties in Venezuela have undergone these procedures fulfilling the democratic obligation they have of choosing fully and internally their members and their Board of Directors.

At the moment the Social Christian party seems to be going thru the clear struggle between two large groups, one presided over by the President of the Republic and the other presided by the former President, President Caldera, which is called Movement towards Socialism, which represents in our country a movement similar to Eurocommunism or World Communism; it also has a struggle internally.

The only thing that we could say in regard to Accion Democratica is that we finished our process with the conviction that leads to union and strengthening of our party.

The other aspect is that this internal struggle of Accion Democratica had to draw the public's attention since the party is so large and leads us to think about the way in which we can control and direct internal elections.

Accion Democratica has 1.270.000 registered members and 700.000 militants participated in the internal elections. Of course in a very small country like Venezuela, the movement of 700.000 people involved in an election that took eight months has to of course draw the attention of the population and even become a bore to the population. Fortunately our elections have concluded that all what we have to do at this time is to prepare the next ones which will be in about two years perhaps we will be able to expedite them better to prevent all the problems that we had at this time.

The third aspect that I feel this meeting should address itself to is the role of the workers' movement in political struggles.

Several times we have heard wise comments of the so-called doctrine of national security. This is a doctrine which is on the edge of a knife, one might say. On one hand it could strengthen the reins of the national defense that all countries must have or it might on the other hand have a dangerous and serious interpretation leading towards military dictatorships.

What we have to recall again is that for many years, for 30 years in fact, there is a very strong pressure on our trade unions, to get them to become non-political trade unions. It is a very good campaign, set up world-wide, we have seen it quite clearly in Venezuela, against politicians and against politics perse. It would seem as the politics were anti-constitutional.

But they push the trade unions to become non-political so that they should not be involved in the goings and comings

of politicians.

Sisters and brothers, I believe that this meeting and every time democratic socialists meet, they should stress the tremendous importance, the great need for the trade union movement to be political.

Accion Democratica which is a party of workers of all kinds is, and will always be, a party for the benefit of the farmers and workers and will always have a close relationship with the trade union movements, with the organized workers.

A socialist party, deprived of the support of the workers movements will very soon become a political club. But on the other hand, and this is even more serious, a workers movement deprived of ideological content and a socialist ideological content, would be a workers movement that is working to make it disappear or to demoralize it.

It is very important that at all our conventions and all our meetings we stress the relationship that must exist between the workers movements and the democratic socialist movement.

We have seen developing over the last two or five years two important factors of propaganda for the benefit of the people in Latin America in general and the workers' movement in particular.

This is the growing interest, the growing union among the Socialist Democrat parties of Latin America, with the resulting interest of the Socialist International in Latin America.

The other one is the creation of other links, other meetings that have taken place in Venezuela, Lisbon, Lima, Mexico to establish ties, friendly associated parallel ties with the Socialist International.

In Accion Democratica we look with much favour upon all organizations or meetings which serve to strengthen the ties between the free democratic parties or parties that are clandestine or in exile.

Again I should repeat that we warmly support the efforts of the International, thru the Committee for Latin-America, and the efforts being put forth by Cqpal to strengthen these ties.

Any movement towards unification should be strongly supported with just one condition that it do not contribute to giving the impression that we are creating rival or parallel movements.

And finally, my dear friends, we reiterate our solidarity and support for all movements of democratic liberation that exist on this continent.

If for instance we have not mentioned specifically the cases of Argentina or Chile, we will do so again with the same warmth we have always done so and with the same support we have always granted them.

If we have not mentioned specifically the painful case of Haiti for instance, we must reiterate it again. And thus on and on, with each and everyone.

But the mechanism of public opinion must understand that the conferences we take part in, that is to say, we members of the International Socialist, that we parties have to concentrate ourselves on the problems of the moment and the most serious problem and the most imperative problem at the moment is that of Central America.

The things that have happened in Guatemala for instance go far beyond what imagination could have invented. Each time one meets one of these important Guatemalan directors in these places, one gets the feeling of admiration and of sadness. One feels that one is speaking to a survival.

From when we had the clandestine struggle in Venezuela and when from when in exile daily we would try to get the news to see which one of our friends had died in this struggle, from that time on we have never felt as badly as we do now as when we look in the press searching to see if any of our brothers of Guatemala has disappeared.

That is why I want to draw your attention in particular for an appeal to all the press and to the public opinion in general all those who attack the anti-reactionary aspects of the movements of revolution to pay attention to what is happening in Guatemala.

In Guatemala the people that are being killed are people that are not serving the interest of the large imperialistic powers of any ideology whatsoever. They are people, blood and bone, democrats like us, people who are being killed by a junta of the government, the hypocrisy and cruelty of which has no paragon or word.

Now in regard to El Salvador, we are looking with a great deal of hope on the recent results of the meeting in Panama.

This meeting in Panama opened a path which might lead to the only solution for El Salvador, which is the political solution. Yet that solution as has been mentioned in a comuniqué that was sent by our friends from El Salvador in Liberation Party, we can't achieve it, without the collaboration of the two large blocks, which at this moment attempt to divide the world.

The reaction of the United States government in the face of the possibility of a committee of the Socialist International were to speak to them, has left us absolutely astonished. And we are sad about this.

I would like to give you some of the latest information. we have received yesterday from well-informed people in the United States. A resistance is growing, a resistance against intervention on the part of the United States or any part of the world. And above all in the case of El Salvador.

I believe that we should make things easy for the Salvadorians so that they can come to a political agreement. There are several alternatives. One born in Mexico, the inter-mediation from the part of the States, another suggested in Panama, intermediation by the president of Socialist International.

All of it will depend ofcourse of the Salvadorians themselves because Salvadorian problems have to be solved in Salvador by Salvadorians.

But I believe that these efforts that started in Mexico and in the Socialist International, should be supported strongly to see solutions. One of them could be to insist on the formula of Brandt's taking part in this, But instead of asking him to speak to the Salvadorians in the United States only perhaps we might find a formula so that this system of mediation be simple-minded with other mediations presented by Brandt or maybe he himself carry out the mediations with visits on the part of mediators with several countries of the area, for instance Cuba, the United States, El Salvador (of course), Panama, Mexico and Venezuela to mention just a few without limiting the number of countries.

Thus we would not say that we are blaming one or two countries for the struggle that is happening in El Salvador. Everyone would have a chance to cooperate, to finish with this bloody war.

I conclude, as almost those who have spoken before me has said, in appeal to union and I remember a novel written by Romulo Gallegos, it was called the "La brizna de paja en el viento".and Gallegos said : The hand has 5 fingers and each one alone has to strength, but if we unite the 5 fingers they form a fist and the fist will be the union with which the Democratic Socialists of the world will help the countries that struggle to re-establish democracies in their countries.

I thank you.

Aruba, March 19, 1981